4: Bowen C-8 (1950) 1951 MK2 Maritime Arabs MK?

usually try to sell their mangrove poles along the South Arabian coast. If they do not sell their poles by the time they get to Oman, they simply put them on the beach and wait until next season. Knowing that the Omanis flood South Arabian ports with poles, the Bahreinis, Kuwaitis, and Persians sail straight for the Persian Gulf and its more profitable markets. Likewise, the Omanis, realizing that the Persian Gulf markets are flooded in the early summer, wait until late summer if they have to sell their poles in the Persian Gulf. Sometimes dhows from Oman carry firewood or fish oil in addition to mangrove poles if they go north to Basra for dates.

If a vessel sells its cargo of mangrove poles a considerable distance from her home port, it may load coral rock as ballast if it is available; this may be sold in Kuwait and ports in eastern Arabia. The coral rock is pried off the sea bottom and is a common commodity for construction purposes in a land where building rock is almost as scarce as wood on the sterile sandy coast.

As we have seen above, Persian and Arab ships make two trips to India during a season, usually carrying dates on consignment, but sometimes they carry dried fish, dried fruit, palm leaf mats, and coffee from the Persian Gulf and Arabia. After they have unloaded, they pick up a cargo of the products of India for sale in their native waters. These products consist mainly of teakwood timber, teak dugout canoes, coir roping stuff, coir matting, bamboo, cotton-goods, cocoanuts, chests, chairs, spices, and tea. Cement and tiles are occasionally loaded, but bricks (a very common product of the Malabar coast) are rarely loaded, as they are manufactured in Iraq and shipped out of Basra. Virtually all the teakwood for dhow construction comes from India, and Indian teak dugout canoes have been spread up and down the shores of the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea by dhows.

The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* tells of ships coasting on the African coast and trading cargoes as they went two thousand years ago. But cargoes have changed considerably from those ancient times when alabaster, myrrh, and frankincense were exported from South Arabia and tortoise shell, hippopotamus teeth, cinnamon, and slaves were exported from East Africa.

By 1800, slaves had become the chief cargo out of East Africa, with Zanzibar as the center; however, with European intrusion into the waters of the Indian Ocean, eventually the British more or less successfully stopped the slave trade, which was in large part carried on by the Omanis. It has been estimated that by 1873 there were thirty thousand slaves ex-